The Origins and Development of the English Language Chapter 5: The Old English Period, Part 3

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Grammar, Concord, Inflection

- Nouns, Modifiers, Verbs are inflected
- Parts of speech have concord based on their Gender, Number, Case
- Nouns and their Modifiers have declensions. They are declined.
- Verbs have conjugations. They are conjugated.

Nouns

- Number: Singular, Plural
- Gender:
  - Masculine (50%)
  - Feminine (30%)
  - Neuter (20%)
- Lots of confusion especially when Scandinavian words are mixed in

Nouns

- Strong and Weak nouns
- Strong nouns were more common
- Strong nouns can be broken into groups according to their distinct inflectional endings
- Weak nouns more general inflectional endings. Sometimes called *n*-stems

Nouns

- Case
- Nominative
  - Includes vocative
- Accusative: expresses the object immediately affected by the action (what?), the direct object.
- Genitive: expresses the possessive meaning: whose? of what? Also after the expression meaning *full of* , *free of* , *worthy of* , *guilty of*, etc.
- Dative: expresses the object towards which the action is directed. After the after the verbs like "say to smb", "send smb", "give to smb"; "known to smb", "necessary for smth / smb", "close to smb", "peculiar for smth".
  Also with prepositions in expressions like *from the enemy, against the wind*, *on the shore*.

Nouns: a-stems most common

	a-stems (Strong Nouns)				
	Masc (short)	Masc (long)	Neut (short)	Neuter (long)	Neuter (long)
	hound	stone	ship	sheep	deer
Singular					
Nom.	hund	stān	scip	scēap	dēor
Acc.	hund	stān	scip	scēap	dēor
Gen	hundes	stānes	scipes	scēapes	dēores
Dat.	hunde	stāne	scipe	scēape	dēore
Plural					
Nom.-Acc.	hundas	stānas	scipu	scēap (ə)	dēor (ə)
Gen	hunda	stāna	scipa	scēapa	dēora
Dat.	hundum	stānum	scipum	scēapum	dēorum

Nouns: ō-stems were Feminine

	ō-stems (Strong Nouns)			*i*-stems	*u*-stems
	Fem (short)	Fem (short)	Fem (long)	Fem	Fem
	love	gift	lore	deed	door
Singular					
Nom.	lufu	ġiefu	lār	dǣd	duru
Acc.	lufe	ġiefe	lāre	dǣd (-e)	duru
Gen	lufe	ġiefe	lāre	dǣde	dura
Dat.	lufe	ġiefe	lāre	dǣde	dura
Plural					
Nom.-Acc.	lufa	ġiefa (-e)	lāra (-e)	dǣda	dura
Gen	lufa	ġiefa (-ena)	lāra	dǣda	dura
Dat.	lufum	ġiefum	lārum	dǣdum	durum

Nouns: r-stems, vowel mutation

	r-stems (Strong Nouns)		Root-consonant stems (*i*-mutation)		
	Masc (short)	Masc (long)	Fem	Masc	Masc
	child	egg	book	foot	man
Singular					
Nom.	ċild	æġ	bōc	fōt	mann
Acc.	ċild	æġ	bōc	fōt	mann
Gen	ċildes	æġes	bōċes, bēċ	fōtes	mannes
Dat.	ċilde	æġe	bēċ	fēt	menn
Plural					
Nom.-Acc.	ċildru	æġ(e)ru	bēċ	fēt	menn
Gen	ċildra	æġ(e)ra	bōca	fōta	manna
Dat.	ċildrum	æġ(e)rum	bōcum	fōtum	mannum

i-mutation

- i-mutation
  This interesting feature changed many of Old English words on a very early stage of the language's history. It is caused by ***i*** (or ***j***) in the next syllable, it affects all vowels, except ***i*** and ***e.*** Vowels move from their back position to the new front one:

- http://babaev.tripod.com/archive/grammar41.html

i-mutation

- ***a > e*** ***(framian > fremman)***
  æ > e (tælian > tellan)
  á > æ' (lárian>læ'ran)
  o > e ***(ofstian > efstan)***
  ó > é ***(dómian > déman)***
  u > y (fullian > fyllan)
  ú > ý ***(cúþian > cýþan)***
  ea > ie (earmiþu > iermþu)
  éa > íe (geléafian > gelíefan)
  eo > ie (afeorrian > afierran, afyrran)
  éo > íe (getréowi > getríewe, getríve)

Nouns: weak nouns

	n-stems (Weak Nouns)				
	Masc	Masc	Neuter	Fem	Fem
	ox	name	eye	earth	sun
Singular					
Nom.	oxa	nama	ēaġe	eorðe	sunne
Acc.	oxan	naman	ēagan	eorðan	sunnan
Gen	oxan	naman	ēagan	eorðan	sunnan
Dat.	oxan	naman	ēagan	eorðan	sunnan
Plural					
Nom.-Acc.	oxan	naman	ēagan	eorðan	sunnan
Gen	oxena	namena	ēagena	eorðena	sunna
Dat.	oxum	namum	ēagum	eorðum	sunnum

Nouns

- eyen, housen, shoen, treen

- one broþer > two broþer > brethren
- cū > cȳ > kine

Mutated vowels? Irregular Plurals

- Which modern English words are plurals with mutated vowels?
- man > men, woman > women
- foot > feet, goose > geese, tooth > teeth
- mouse > mice, louse > lice
- ox > oxen
- brother > brethren
- brōc > breeches
- child > children, cū > kine

OE noun declension summary

Strong declension (***a, ja, wa, ó, jó, wó, i*** -stems).

	Masc.		Neut.		Fem.	
	Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.
N	-	-as	-	-u (-)	-	-a
G	-es	-a	-es	-a	-e	-a
D	-e	-um	-e	-um	-e	-um
A	-	-as	-	-u (-)	-e	-a

	Weak declension		***u***-stems	
	Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.
N	-	-an	-	-a
G	-an	-ena	-a	-a
D	-an	-um	-a	-um
A	-an	-an	-	-a

Modifiers: Demonstratives

- Demonstrative showed concord with the number and gender (when singular) of the noun they were modifying.

Modifiers: = Definite article

	That, The		
	Masc	Neuter	Feminine
Singular			
Nom.	sē se	þæt	sēo (she?)
Acc.	þone	þæt	Þā
Gen	þæs	þæs	Þǣre
Dat.	þǣm, þām	þǣm, þām	Þǣre
Plural			
Nom.-Acc.	þā		
Gen	þāra, þǣra		
Dat.	þǣm, þām		

Modifiers:

	This, Those		
	Masc	Neuter	Feminine
Singular			
Nom.	þes	þis	þēos
Acc.	þisne	þis	þās
Gen	þisses	þisses	þisse
Dat.	þissum	þissum	þisse
Plural			
Nom.-Acc.	þās		
Gen	þissa		
Dat.	þissum		

Modifiers: Adjectives

- Adjectives were inflected for case, number and gender
- Also had weak and strong declensions

Modifiers: Adjectives

- Weak used after demonstratives and possessive pronouns (when the noun was definite)
  - *se ealda mann* ‘the old man, that old man’
  - *mīn ealda frēond* ‘my old friend’
- Strong used with indefinite nouns or when it isn’t right next to the definite noun
  - *se mann is eald* ‘the man is old’
  - *ealde menn* ‘old men’

Strong declension of 'good man' (guman is an n-stem)

	Singular	Plural
Nom	*gōd guma*	*gōde guman*
Acc	*gōdne guman*	*gōde guman*
Gen	*gōdes guman*	*gōdra gumena*
Dat	*gōdum guman*	*gōdum gumun*
Ins	*gōde guman*	

Weak declension of 'good man' (n-stem noun)

	Singular	Plural
Nom	*se gōda guma*	*þā gōdan guman*
Acc	*þone gōdan guman*	*þā gōdan guman*
Gen	*þæs gōdan guman*	*þāra gōdra (gōdena) gumena*
Dat	*þǣm gōdan guman*	*þǣm gōdum gumun*
Ins	*þȳ gōdan guman*	

Adjectives

- Comparative and Superlative versions of adjectives were formed by adding -ra or -ost to the adjective
- ***earm*** (poor) > ***earmra*** > ***earmost***
- ***blæc*** (black) > ***blæcra*** > ***blacost***

Adjectives

- Some adjectives had mutations in their root vowels when their comparative and superlative forms were created
- ***eald*** (old) > ***yldra*** > ***yldest***

  ald > ***eldra*** > ***eldest***
  strong > ***strengra*** > ***strengest***
  long > ***lengra*** > ***lengest***
  geong (young) > ***gingra*** > ***gingest***

Adjectives

- There were some adjectives with irregular comparative and superlative forms
- ***gōd*** (good) **– *bet(e)ra – betst (or sēlra - sēlest)***
  yfel (bad) **- *wiersa - wierest***
  micel (much) **- *māra - mǣst***
  lȳtel (little) **- *lǣssa - lǣst***
  fear (far) **- *fierra - fierrest, fyrrest***
  nēah (near) **- *nēarra - nīehst, nȳhst***
  ǣ***r*** (early) **- ǣ*rra* - ǣ*rest***
  fore (before) **- *furþra - fyrest*** (first)
- http://babaev.tripod.com/archive/grammar42.html#4

Adjectives

- Some superlatives were formed with an alternative suffix –*(u)ma*
  - *forma* – but the m lost it superlative force, so –est was added also.
  - formest, midmest, ūtemest, innemest
- These words were misunderstood as meaning most
  - foremost, midmost, utmost, inmost
- Now we have a productive suffix in modern English
  - uppermost, furthermost, topmost

Adjectives: suffixes

1. -***ede*** (group "adjective stem + substantive stem") - ***micelhéafdede*** (large-headed)
2. -***ihte*** (from substantives with mutation) - ***þirnihte*** (thorny)
3. -***ig*** (from substantives with mutation) - ***hálig*** (holy), ***mistig*** (misty)
4. -***en, -in*** (with mutation) - ***gylden*** (golden), ***wyllen*** (wóllen)
5. -***isc*** (nationality) - ***Englisc, Welisc, mennisc*** (human)
6. -***sum*** (from stems of verbs, adjectives, substantives) - ***sibbsum*** (peaceful), ***híersum*** (obedient)
7. -***feald*** (from stems of numerals, adjectives) - ***þríefeald*** (threefold)
8. -***full*** (from abstract substantive stems) - ***sorgfull*** (sorrowful)
9. -***léás*** (from verbal and nominal stems) - ***slæpléás*** (sleepless)
10. -***líc*** (from substantive and adjective stems) - ***eorþlíc*** (earthly)
11. -***weard*** (from adjective, substantive, adverb stems) - ***inneweard*** (internal), ***hámweard*** (homeward)

- http://babaev.tripod.com/archive/grammar42.html#4

Pronouns

- Still very complex in modern English

OE Personal Pronouns

	singular	dual	plural
first person	I	we two	we
N	*ic*	*wit*	*wē*
A	*mē, mec*	*unc (uncit)*	*ūs (ūsic)*
G	*mīn*	*uncer*	*ūre (ūser)*
D	*mē*	*unc*	*ūs*

Second person

	singular	dual	plural
second person	you	you two	you
N	*þū*	*git*	*gē*
A	*þē (þec)*	*inc (incit)*	*ēow (ēowic)*
G	*þīn*	*incer*	*ēower*
D	*þē*	*inc*	*ēow*

Third person: he, it, she, they

	Masc	Neu	Fem	Plural
N	*hē*	*hit*	*hēo, hīe, hī, hīo,*	*hīe, hī, hȳ, hīo*
A	*hine*	*hit*	*hī, hīe, hȳ*	*hīe, hī, hȳ, hīo*
G	*his*	*his*	*hire, hiere, hyre*	*hira, hiera, heora*
D	*him*	*him*	*hire, hiere, hyre*	*him, heom*

Interrogative Pronouns (singular)

	Masc/Fem	Neut
Nom	hwā (who)	hwæt (what)
Acc	hwone	hwæt
Gen	hwæs (whose)	
Dat	hwǣm, hwām (whom)	
Ins	hwȳ, hwī (why) *hwon*	

Verbs

- Modern English has regular and irregular verbs.
- What are the features?

Verbs

- Old English had
- Strong Verbs:
  - About 300 of the most common verbs
  - Past and PP with a vowel change
- Weak Verbs
  - Past and PP with a dental suffix (t or d)
- Other Verbs
  - Suppletive Verbs: be, go, do
  - Preterit-Present Verbs: Now our modals

Verbs

- Strong Verbs
- Seven classes based on the vowel change:
  - infinitive > past sing > past plural > pp
  - (see Millward 103)
- Verbs are also conjugated
  - (see Millward 104)

OE Strong Verbs: Present tense

			Class 1	Class 2	Class 3*	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
	Infinitive		drīfan 'to drive'	cēosan 'to choose'	singan 'to sing'	stelan 'to steal'	sprecan 'to speak'	scacan 'to shake'
Present	Indicative	1 Sg	drīfe	cēose	singe	stile	sprice	scæce
		2 Sg	drīfst	cēosest	singst	stilst	spricst	scæcst
		3 Sg	drīfð	cēoseð	singð	stilð	spricð	scæcð
		Pl	drīfað	cēosað	singað	stilað	spricað	scæcað
	Subj	Sg	drīfe	cēose	singe	stile	sprice	scæce
		Pl	drīfen	cēosen	singen	stilen	spricen	scæcen
	Imper	2 Sg	drīf	cēos	sing	stil	spric	scæc
		2 Pl	drīfað	cēosað	singað	stilað	spricað	scæcað
	Participle		drīfende	cēosende	singende	stilende	spricende	scæcende

OE Strong Verbs: Past tense

			Class 1	Class 2	Class 3*	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
	Infinitive		drīfan 'to drive'	cēosan 'to choose'	singan 'to sing'	stilan 'to steal'	sprecan 'to speak'	scacan 'to shake'
Past	Indicative	1, 3 Sg	drāf	cēas	sang	stāl	spræc	scōc
		2 Sg	drife	cēse	singe	stīle	sprīce	scūce
		Pl	drifon	cēson	singon	stīlon	sprīcon	scūcon
	Subj	Sg	drife	cēse	singe	stīle	sprīce	scūce
		Pl	drifen	cēsen	singen	stīlen	sprīcen	scūcen
	Participle		(ge)drifen	(ge)cēsen	(ge)singen	(ge)stīlen	(ge)sprīcen	(ge)scūcen

Verbs

- Weak Verbs
- Had a dental suffix
- Sometimes also had a vowel change

OE Weak Verbs: Present tense

			Weak Ia	Weak Ib	Weak II	Weak III
Present	Infinitive		fremman 'to do'	bærnan 'to burn'	lōcian 'to look'	habban 'to have'
	Indicative	1 Sg	fremme	bærne	lōcie	hæbbe
		2 Sg	fremest	bærnst	lōcast	hæfst
		3 Sg	fremeþ	bærnþ	lōcaþ	hæf(a)þ
		Pl	fremmaþ	bærnaþ	lōciaþ	habbaþ
	Subj	Sg	fremme	bærne	lōcie	hæbbe
		Pl	fremmen	bærnen	lōcien	hæbben
	Imper	2 Sg	freme	bærn	lōca	hafa
		2 Pl	fremmaþ	bærnaþ	lōciaþ	habbaþ
	Participle		fremmende	bærnende	lōciende	hæbbende

OE Weak Verbs: Past tense

			Weak Ia	Weak Ib	Weak II	Weak III
	Infinitive		fremman 'to do'	bærnan 'to burn'	lōcian 'to look'	habban 'to have'
Past	Indicative	1, 3 Sg	freme:de	bærn:de	lōco:de	hæf:de
		2 Sg	freme:dest	bærn:dest	lōco:dest	hæf:dest
		Pl	freme:don	bærn:don	lōco:don	hæf:don
	Subj	Sg	freme:de	bærn:de	lōco:de	hæf:de
		Pl	freme:den	bærn:den	lōco:den	hæf:den
	Participle		(ge)freme:d	(ge)bærne:d	(ge)lōco:d	(ge)hæf:d

Exercise I: OE Strong & Weak Verbs

Determine whether the OE verb is strong or weak. Then give the PDE form for the past tense. Is this form strong or weak?

Old English			PDE	
Infinitive	Past (Sg.)	S or W?	Preterite	S or W?
bregan 'to bring'	brōhte			
gifan 'to give'	geaf			
secgan 'to say'	sæcgde			
hȳran 'to hear'	hȳrde			
hōn 'to hang'	hēng			
hyngran 'to hunger'	hyngrede			
lōcian 'to look'	lōcode			
scīnan 'to shine'	scān			
stēppan 'to step'	stōp			
tǣcan 'to teach'	tāhte			

Exercise I: OE Strong & Weak Verbs

Determine whether the OE verb is strong or weak. Then give the PDE form for the past tense. Is this form strong or weak?

Old English			PDE	
Infinitive	Past (Sg.)	S or W?	Preterite	S or W?
bregan 'to bring'	brōhte	W	brought	W
gifan 'to give'	geaf	S	gave	S
secgan 'to say'	sæcgde	W	said	W
hȳran 'to hear'	hȳrde	W	heard	W
hōn 'to hang'	hēng	S	hung, hanged	S/W
hyngran 'to hunger'	hyngrede	W	hungered	W
lōcian 'to look'	lōcode	W	looked	W
scīnan 'to shine'	scān	S	shone, shined	S/W
stēppan 'to step'	stōp	S	stepped	W
tǣcan 'to teach'	tāhte	W	taught	W

OE Other Verbs: Present tense

			wesan 'to be'	bēon 'to be'	dōn 'to do, make, take'	willan 'to want, wish'	gān 'to go, walk'
Present	Infinitive		wesan 'to be'	bēon 'to be'	dōn 'to do, make, take'	willan 'to want, wish'	gān 'to go, walk'
	Indicative	1 Sg	eom	bēo	dō	wille	gā
		2 Sg	eart	bist	dēst	wilt	gǣst
		3 Sg	is	biþ	dēþ	wile	gǣþ
		Pl	sind(on)	bēoþ	dōþ	willaþ	gāþ
	Subj	Sg	sȳ	bēo	dō	wille	gā
		Pl	sȳn	bēon	dōn	willen	gān
	Imper	2 Sg	wes	bēo	dō	wille	gā
		2 Pl	wesaþ	bēoþ	dōþ	willaþ	gāþ
	Participle		wesende	bēonde	dōnde	willende	gānde

OE Other Verbs: Past tense

Past	Infinitive		wesan 'to be'	bēon 'to be'	dōn 'to do, make, take'	willan 'to want, wish	gān 'to go, walk'
	Indicative	1, 3 Sg	wæs		dyde	wolde	ēode
		2 Sg	wǣre		dydest	woldest	ēodest
		Pl	wǣron		dydon	woldon	ēodon
	Subj	Sg	wǣre		dyde	wolde	ēode
		Pl	wǣren		dyden	wolden	ēoden
	Participle		(ge)bēon		(ge)dōn	(ge)willan	(ge)gān

Syntax

- Word order is not as important in OE because of the inflections

OE Word Order: Sentences

SVO	Hē	geseah	þone	mann
	he(Nom)	*saw*	*the*	*man(Acc)*

VSO	Þa	sende	sē	cyning	þone	disc
	then	*sent*	*the*	*king(Nom)*	*the*	*dish(Acc)*

SOV	Þa	hē	þone	cyning	sōhte	hē	bēotode
	When	*he(Nom)*	*the*	*king(Acc)*	*visited,*	*he(Nom)*	*boasted*

Hēo	hine	lǣrde
she(Nom)	*him(Acc)*	*advised*

OE Word Order: Nouns

Adj-N

þa beorhtan steorran
the bright stars

wlance wīgsmiþas
proud warriors

N-Adj

bearn unweaxen
boy youthful

men lēofan
men dear

More than one modifier

mīne þegnas twēgen
my servants two

ān fæt fyder-scyte and brād
a vessel four-cornered and broad

OE Word Order: Verb Phrases

Negation

Ne + verb

Ne geseah ic næafre þa burg
Not saw I ever that town

se cyninc ne sceall arīsan of ðām bedde
the king not shall arise from the bed

Multiple Negation

Hē cwæþ þæt nān man ne būde be nordan him.
He said that no man not lived by north him.
'He said that no man lived to the north of him'

OE Word Order: Interrogatives

PDE	OE
do Subject Verb (Object)	Verb Subject Object
Do you have hawks?	Hæfst ðu hafocas? *Have you hawks?*
Do you know how to tame hawks?	Canst ðu temman hafocas? *Know you (to) tame hawks?*
Do you hear, sailor?	Gehyrst þu, sælida? *Hear you, sailor?*

OE Word Order: Interrogatives

WH-Questions

Hwæt secge wē be þǣm cōce?

What say we about the cook?

Hwilce fixas gefēhst þu?

Which fishes catch you?

Hwy stane ge ealne dæg idele?

Why stand you all day idle?

Hwær eart þu?

Where are you?

Translation practice

1. se cyning wæs swift
2. se biscop wæs dēad
3. se fisc swam under þæm stāne
4. se cyning lufaþ þā cwēn
5. sēo cwēn lufaþ þone cyning
6. se biscop hīerde þā cwēn
7. þone cyning cyseþ sēo cwēn
8. þæt hors gelædde se biscop

- McCully & Hilles. (2005). The Earliest English. p. 22

Exercise: OE Word Order

In each sentence, describe how the word order differs from PDE.

	OE	PDE
1. His gelēafa hine getrymde. *His faith him strengthened.*	S O V	S V O
2. ōswold him cōm tō *Oswold him came to*	S O V P	S V P O
3. And hē næfre nǣnig leoð geleornade. *And he never no poetry learned.*	S Neg Neg O V	S Neg V Neg O
4. And hē hine sōna to þǣre abbudissan gelǣdde. *And he him immediately to the abbess led.*	S O Adv PP V	S V O Adv PP
5. And þa ongeat se cyning þæt. *And then discovered the king that.*	V S O	S V O
6. Hē ofslōg þone aldorman þe him lengest wunode. *He slew the earl that him longest had served.*	O A V	V O A
7. Hē þǣr wunode oþþæt hine ān swān ofstang. *He there dwelt until him one swineherd stabbed.*	S O V O S V	S V O S|V O

- æ ɛ ə ī ē ð lǣn þ

Pronunciation and Spelling: Vowels

- Vowel length was a significant distinction
- Our conventions:
  - When writing
    - macron over long vowels: *gōd* ‘good’ vs. *god* ‘god’
  - With phonetic transcriptions
    - colon after long vowels [go:d] vs. [gɒd]
- Sometimes Old English scribes marked long vowels with a slanting line
  - *gód*

Pronunciation and Spelling: Vowels

- *a* as in *habban* (have)
- *æ* as in *þæt* (that)
- *e* as in *settan* (set)
- *i* as in *sittan* (sit)
- *o* as in *moðde* (moth)
- *u* as in *sundor* (sunder)
- *y* as in *fyllan* (fill)
- *ā* as in *hām* (home)
- *ǣ* as in *dǣl* (deal)
- *ē* as in *fēdan* (feed)
- *ī* as in *rīdan* (ride)
- *ō* as in *fōda* (food)
- *ū* as in *mūs* (mouse)
- *ȳ* as in *mȳs* (mice)

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